

REMARKS

Initially, Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for indicating the acceptance of the amended drawings filed on March 31, 2005. Applicant would also like to thank the Examiner for indicating the allowability of claims 2, 4, 6-9, 11-14 and 24, if rewritten into independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant would further like to thank the Examiner for indicating the allowability of claims 15-22, 27 and 28.

In the outstanding Official Action, claims 1, 3, 5, 10, 23 and 25-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over TSUZUKI et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,086,267) in view of Applicant's admitted prior art. Claims 2, 4, 6-9, 11-14 and 24 were objected-to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were otherwise indicated as allowable if rewritten into independent form to include all of the limitations of base and any intervening claims. Claims 15-22 and 27-28 were indicated as allowable.

Upon entry of the present amendment, claim 1 will have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 2, 3, 23, 25 and 26, each of which previously depended from claim 1, will have been amended to depend from claim 28. Claim 24 will have been amended to eliminate an informality. Claim 5 will have been rewritten into independent form, to include substantially all of the features previously recited in independent claim 1. At least in view of the Examiner's indication of the allowability of the subject matter recited in claim 5, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection thereto.

P21531.A07

Applicant notes that the features of claims 28 were previously indicated as allowable without restriction. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that each of claims 2, 3, 23, 25 and 26 is allowable at least for depending, directly or indirectly, from an allowable independent claim 28, as well as for additional reasons related to their own recitations. Applicant additionally notes that claims 4, 6-9, 11-14 and 24 depend from claim 2. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that each of claims 4, 6-9, 11-14 and 24 is allowable at least for depending, directly or indirectly, from an allowable independent claim, as well as for additional reasons related to their own recitations. Further, claim 10 depends from newly independent claim 5, the subject matter of which was previously indicated as allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 10 is allowable at least for depending, directly or indirectly, from an allowable independent claim 5, as well as for additional reasons related to its own recitations.

The herein-contained amendments should not be considered an indication of Applicant's acquiescence with the propriety of the outstanding objections and rejections. Rather, Applicant respectfully submits that cancelled claim 1 was allowable at least for the reasons set forth in the Response Under 37 C.F.R. §1.111 filed on March 31, 2005. Nevertheless, Applicant has amended the claims as shown above in order to expedite prosecution of the present application and to obtain early allowance of claims.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3, 5, 10, 23 and 25-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as well as the

P21531.A07

objection to claims 2, 4, 6-9, 11-14 and 24. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the outstanding objections and rejections, and an indication of the allowability of each of the claims now pending.

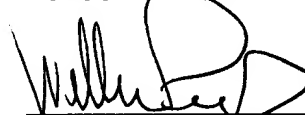
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance, and believes that he has now done so. Applicant has amended the claims to cancel rejected claims and/or to amend rejected claims to depend from a claim already indicated as allowable.

Any amendments made by this Response, which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
Takaaki HASHIMOTO



Bruce H. Bernstein
Reg. No. 29,027

William Pieprz
Reg. No. 33,630

December 5, 2005
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191